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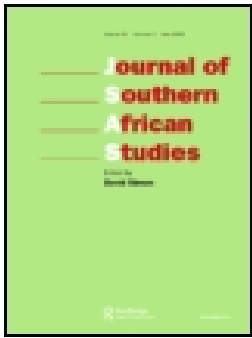
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## Protest and the Lovedale Riot of 1946: 'Largely a Rebellion against Authority'?

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# *Protest and the Lovedale Riot of 1946: 'Largely a Rebellion against Authority'?*

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*Protests occurred at many black educational institutions in South Africa before the usual dating of such occurrences from the 1970s on. Among these, a riot and related protests at Lovedale Institute in 1946 are explored here using archival material from extensive inquiries made contemporaneously by its authority figures, including its principal, staff, council and a committee of enquiry, with the voices of students and parents barely audible in these. The connections between the Lovedale protests and those in other educational institutions in 1946 are also indicated. The conclusion reviews features seen as characterising post-1976 protests, outlined in the introduction, in the light of the 1946 Lovedale protests.*

**Keywords:** coercive authority; Lovedale; political protest; social change; student riots; white authority

## **Student Protests in Context**

In describing South Africa as a 'protest nation', Duncan comments that '[p]rotesters tap into a rich protest culture in the country that dates back to the epic struggles against exploitation and oppression under apartheid', referring to the 1970s and afterwards. Seeing protest as relatively unmediated by formal organisations in being a kind of direct or participatory democracy, she proposes that they 'contest existing distributions of power in society by bringing the organised power of the people to bear on questions of pressing importance'. Although most are micro-mobilisations at local level, they are, for her, still part of broader processes of social change, as 'an indication of more conflictual social relations at the macro level'.<sup>1</sup> Duncan identifies two broad approaches to understanding protest events in South Africa: as a systemic challenge to the state and social order, and as a means of calling the African National Congress (ANC) government to account and complementing mainstream political activities. She also recognises complexities here, that many protests are not consciously anti-systemic, ideological aspects can be unclear, participants have different goals, and purposes and interpretations can change.

Such a change can be perceived regarding 2015–16 student protests, with the work of many commentators on #FeesMustFall and related protests exploring shifts in their character

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1 J. Duncan, *Protest Nation: The Right to Protest in South Africa* (Durban, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2016), pp. 1, 5, 6.

and that these events ‘shook the government’, moving from protest to organised challenge.<sup>2</sup> For some, the origins of recent protests are seen to lie in the incomplete transition achieved in 1994 and the rejection by younger generations of past compromises. However, how are these recent occurrences positioned in relation to earlier protests?<sup>3</sup> There is in fact a considerable degree of presentism in how such matters are approached. For example, while Everatt’s overview of youth activism mentions the role of the ANC Youth League in the 1970s as a precursor to the Soweto uprising, this is just in passing, and his focus goes forward from 1976 ‘to the school boycotts of the 1980s, the youth-enforced consumer boycotts of the 1980s ... to the primarily youth-populated youth defence and self-protection units that fought on opposing sides in the 1990–94 low intensity war’, firmly anchoring them in a post-1976 context.<sup>4</sup> This is a widely shared view and can be found in much of the relevant literature. Overarching ideas in this are that educational protests are dated from the 1970s and the watershed of Soweto, and increasingly so after the 1994 change of government; they are seen as an expression of popular feeling; they are viewed as demonstrating macro-level social relations, although surfacing at local micro-levels; they have a range of purposes and organisational forms; some are anti-system, and others more reformist; educational institutions provide a susceptible context for their occurrence; and there may be significant changes over time.<sup>5</sup> These are helpful pointers and are returned to in the conclusion.

Alongside such views, the research literature on student activism and protest has put on the agenda that such protests actually long pre-date the 1970s, and also occurred in other places and contexts than those already focused on. Thus it has been variously shown that non-urban protests have been neglected, the role of teachers as change agents has been insufficiently recognised, the occurrence of local events as triggers has been underplayed in favour of macro matters and an assumption of structural causality, the importance of the specific locales in which protests have occurred has been neglected, the role of educational institutions as recruiting grounds for political activism

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2 S. Booyesen (ed.), *Fees Must Fall: Student Revolt, Decolonisation and Governance in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2016), p. 1. See also P. Alexander, ‘Rebellion of the Poor: South Africa’s Service Delivery Protests – A Preliminary Analysis’, *Review of African Political Economy*, 37, 123 (2010), pp. 25–40; P. Alexander, ‘Marikana, Turning Point in South African History’, *Review of African Political Economy*, 40, 138 (2013), pp. 605–19; S. Badat, ‘Deciphering the Meanings and Explaining the South African Higher Education Students Protests of 2015–16’, *Pax Academica*, 1, 1/2 (2015), pp. 71–106; T. Bosch, ‘Twitter Activism and Youth in South Africa: The Case of #RhodesMustFall’, *Information, Communication and Society*, 20 (2017), pp. 221–32; L. le Grange, ‘Decolonising the University Curriculum’, *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30, 2 (2016), pp. 1–12. C. Naicker, ‘From Marikana to #feesmustfall: The Praxis of Popular Politics in South Africa’, *Urbanisation*, 1, 1 (2016), pp. 53–61; B. Oxlund, ‘#EverythingMustFall: The Use of Social Media and Violent Protests in the Current Wave of Student Riots in South Africa’, *Anthropology Now*, 8, 2 (2016), pp. 1–13; L. Stanley, ‘The Fire Next Time; Generations, Established/Outsider Groups and South African Universities in Crisis’ (2017), available at [www.whiteswritingwhiteness.ed.ac.uk/Thinking-with-Elias/The-fire-next-time/](http://www.whiteswritingwhiteness.ed.ac.uk/Thinking-with-Elias/The-fire-next-time/) retrieved 17 May 2018.

3 On the long lineage of protest in South Africa, see G.M. Carter and T. Karis (eds), *From Protest to Challenge: A History of African Politics in South Africa, Volumes 1–6* (New York, Hoover Institution Press, 1972).

4 D. Everatt, ‘Standing on the Shoulders of Giants? Successive Generations of Youth Sacrifice in South Africa’, in Booyesen (ed.), *Fees Must Fall*, p. 127.

5 See W. Beinart, ‘Political and Collective Violence in Southern African Historiography’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 3 (1992), pp. 455–86; W. Beinart and M. Dawson (eds), *Popular Politics and Resistance Movements in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2010); J. Brown, *South Africa’s Insurgent Citizens: On Dissent and the Possibility of Politics* (London, Zed Books, 2015); M. Larmer, P. Dwyer and L. Zelig, *African Struggles Today: Social Movements Since Independence* (Chicago, Haymarket Books, 2012); J. Tournadre, *A Turbulent South Africa: Post-Apartheid Social Protest* (New York, SUNY Press, 2018).

has been underplayed, and there has been a failure to contextualise the events of 1976 and after in relation to earlier protests.<sup>6</sup>

The discussion following contributes to this research-based literature on student protests occurring before 1976. It explores in depth protests in 1946 at Lovedale Institute in the Eastern Cape, and makes reference to related events occurring at the same time in other educational institutions and also in earlier and later years, including a 1920 Lovedale riot.<sup>7</sup> For reasons explored later, student voices are largely absent in the archival materials because of particular features of the Lovedale protests, with the result that present discussion is necessarily more an account of how largely white authority figures attempted to understand the protests than an examination of student grievances. Notably, the stance adopted by a large majority of the student body was to remain silent, so that the archival documentation focuses on educator and other official perspectives on the protests and their decisions about how to respond to these challenges to their authority.

## Lovedale and the Lineage of Educational Protest

There have been many strikes, marches and other protests by South African school, college and university students over the years, some known worldwide. In discussing the 2015–16 student riots, Jansen provides useful consideration of why education has been the locus for powerful and resonant protests: the student body is formed by elite sections of a generation with high expectations, who are living or studying away from parental and community controls, in an environment promising personal development and change, in a context of limited resources and opportunities, with wider political protests also occurring.<sup>8</sup> In the long lineage of student protests, those at Lovedale Institute in 1946 remain of note, in part because Lovedale was a flagship for black education, and so events there caught both the public eye and that of officialdom, in part because related protests occurred in other institutions and were harbingers of later change.

The factors noted by Jansen are all discernible in the Lovedale protest records, along with other powerful motivations. The boundaries of Lovedale as an institution were clear, but

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6 Particular influences on discussion here are C. Bundy, 'Street Sociology and Pavement Politics: Aspects of Youth and Student Resistance in Cape Town 1985', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13, 3 (1987), pp. 303–30; L. Chisholm, 'Fate Comes to the Mission Schools: Fire at Bethel, 1953', *South African Historical Journal*, 69, 1 (2017), pp. 121–37; N. Diseko, 'The Origins and Development of the South African Students Movement (SASM): 1968–1976', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 1 (1992), pp. 40–62; C. Glaser, "'We must infiltrate the tsotsis': School Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto, 1968–1976", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 2 (1998), pp. 301–23; A. Heffernan, 'Black Consciousness's Lost Leader: Abraham Tiro, the University of the North, and the Seeds of South Africa's Student Movement in the 1970s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41, 1 (2015), pp. 173–86; D. Hodgkinson, 'The "Hardcore" Student Activist: The Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), State Violence, and Frustrated Masculinity, 2000–2008', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39, 4 (2013), pp. 863–83; S. Mathabatha, 'The 1976 Student Revolts and the Schools in Lebowa, 1970–1976', *South African Historical Journal*, 51, 1 (2004), pp. 108–29; A.S. Mlambo, 'Student Protest and State Reaction in Colonial Rhodesia: The 1973 Chimukwembe Student Demonstration at the University of Rhodesia', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 3 (1995), pp. 473–90; T. Moloi, 'Bodibeng High School: Black Consciousness Philosophy and Students Demonstration, 1940s–1976', *South African Historical Journal*, 63, 1 (2011), pp. 102–26; L.-A. Naidoo, 'The Role of Radical Pedagogy in the South African Students Organisation and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, 1968–1973', *Education as Change*, 19, 2 (2015), pp. 112–32; P.A. Varg, 'Intellectual Climate and Student Unrest', *Journal of Higher Education*, 37, 2 (1996), pp. 76–9; T.R.H. White, 'Student Disturbances at Fort Hare in 1955', *Kleio*, 29, 1 (1997), pp. 115–38. On women's education specifically, see M. Healy-Clancy, *A World of Their Own: A History of South African Women's Education* (Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013).

7 On related protests, see R. Edgar, 'African Educational Protest in South Africa: The American School Movement in the Transkei in the 1920s', in P. Kallaway (ed.), *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984), pp. 184–91.

8 J. Jansen, *As by Fire: The End of the South African University* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2017).

external happenings, including strikes and protests across a number of educational institutions, permeated through to its student members via family and network contacts, political literature and newspapers, and consequently affected how staff and students saw the institution and each other. There were on-site inquiries into the 1946 Lovedale protests, which also made use of an investigation of protests in 1920, producing the extensive documentation now archived in the Cory Library's Lovedale and related archive collections, which has enabled the research towards this article.<sup>9</sup>

Lovedale at the time was a very large teaching institution with different kinds of schools and related activities under an umbrella centre – technical, biblical, teacher training, a high school and a hospital.<sup>10</sup> At the time of the 1920 protests, its principal was James Henderson; at the time of the 1946 events, R.H.W. Shepherd.<sup>11</sup> For many years, Lovedale was *the* outstanding establishment for black education, providing a more advanced and racially equal education than available elsewhere, and drawing students from many parts of southern Africa. It included people of a range of ages and ethnic backgrounds: white students as well as black, girls and young women as well as boys and young men, with the student complement including many from the black elite. In 1906, it was decided that a new Inter-State College, later University, should be founded at Fort Hare rather than Lovedale. Fort Hare opened as a degree-giving body in 1916 with Alexander Kerr its principal.<sup>12</sup> They were in important respects sister establishments, and many students moved from Lovedale to Fort Hare, and there were close staff relationships. Both institutions (which still exist, in different forms) are located in the town of Alice, Eastern Cape.

South African student protests and related activities in predominantly mission schools and colleges had occurred well before 1920; the first detailed at Lovedale, for instance, was in 1900, under the temporary leadership of A.W. Roberts, although others occurred earlier.<sup>13</sup> As well as at Lovedale, protests occurred in 1946 at other education establishments for the black elite, with those mentioned in the Lovedale documents including the Wilberforce Institute in Johannesburg, St Matthews in Keiskammhoek, near King William's Town, the Healdtown Institute in Healdtown near Fort Beaufort, Blythswood in Nqamakwe, St John's in Umtata, and a number of London Missionary Society (LMS) schools. Most were mission-governed, though the Wilberforce Institute was an American-founded African Methodist episcopal college, while the most significant of the LMS troubles occurred at its mission school at Inyati in 1932, being described as an insurrection.<sup>14</sup> The protests from 1920 and subsequently are associated with widespread political action protesting against extensions of

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9 See especially Cory Library, Rhodes University, Eastern Cape (hereafter CL): MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots. See also CL, MS 14,717 Fort Hare Troubles in 1955; CL, MS 14,724 Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland and the South African Treason Trials 1956–7; CL, PR 3682 R.H.W. Shepherd Collection, 'Correspondence Regarding Shepherd's Work, Lovedale etc'; and CL, PR 4088 Alexander Kerr Collection. In addition, see Albany Museum, Grahamstown: DSP 23/46 'Report of proceedings ... into the causes of certain disturbances that took place at Lovedale on the night of 7 August 1946'; see also University of Witwatersrand Historical Papers (hereafter Wits): AD1760 Union Advisory Board on Native Education Papers, 'Report of the commission of inquiry into disturbances at educational institutions, 1946'.

10 Wits, AD1715 South African Institute of Race Relations 1892–1974, 14/4/5/1, 'Lovedale Hospital Board, Staff and Statistics'. See also G.C. Oosthuizen, *Shepherd of Lovedale: A Life for Southern Africa* (Johannesburg, Human Sciences Research Council and Hugh Kearthland, 1970); R.H.W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa 1824–1955* (Lovedale, Lovedale Press, 1971).

11 Letters by both men are part of the *Whites Writing Whiteness* project, detailed at <https://www.whiteswritingwhiteness.ed.ac.uk>, retrieved 17 May 2018.

12 CL, PR 4088 Alexander Kerr Collection.

13 K. Snedegar, *Mission, Science, and Race in South Africa: A.W. Roberts of Lovedale, 1883–1938* (New York, Lexington Books, 2015).

14 University of London SOAS Library, Archives and Special Collections, London Missionary Society, Southern Africa Incoming, Rhodesia Correspondence 1900–1940, 1932 file.

racial policies and practices by the state, including, in most cases, major strikes, as detailed below.

- 1919–20: Protests in educational contexts involved over twenty institutions, with letters on file from a number of the principals concerned and a riot occurring at Lovedale, discussed below.
- 1929: A significant number of protests in educational institutions occurred, starting at Blythwood, with Lovedale's then principal, Henderson, suggesting that the Heads' Association should pool information and responses – 'steps must be taken to render a repetition of such incidents ... [have] serious consequences for those taking part in them so they will, after perhaps more than one trial of strength, come to an end'.<sup>15</sup>
- 1944–46: Many protests began sporadically across the colleges, including Lovedale, Blythwood, Healdtown and others. Then, in April 1946, boycotts and other troubles at Lovedale are noted, followed in August by more serious protests, with a riot leading to its closure, detailed below.
- 1955–56: Widespread protests occurred in educational institutions, including a riot in 1956 that led to the closure of Fort Hare, noted below.<sup>16</sup>
- 1957, 1960: There are comments about various troubles in these years noted at Fort Hare, though not Lovedale.

The 1946 Lovedale student protests occurred, then, as part of a sequence of educational protests. Such protests started well before 1946, occurred in many elite black educational institutions and continued through to 1960, when the Lovedale record ends. The major events occurred in 1920 and 1946. They spread from the mission schools to the state school system following the 1953 establishment of the Bantu Education Department.<sup>17</sup> With hindsight, it is clear that educational protests were related to wider movements for change. For those involved at the time, however, things were not so clear, and people struggled to understand what had happened and why, with the views of senior staff and parents traceable in the documents on record but, for reasons discussed below, with the views of students less well represented. The large majority of statements and letters at the time indicate that people perceived important local factors as influencing events at Lovedale.

The archived documentation on Lovedale's 1946 protests includes letters and other papers of the principals of the day, and a large collection on local investigations of the protests, which also includes papers regarding events in 1920. There are also briefer interpolated discussions of later protests, including exchanges between the heads of Lovedale and Fort Hare in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>18</sup> Much of the documentation is concerned with authorities piecing together a narrative of unfolding events in 1946, including by reference to 1920; and the key events identified can helpfully be outlined, while the subsequent analysis explores the complexities that these were assembled from.

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15 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(1), 'Notes of riots in 1920'.

16 For continuities in student protests at Fort Hare, see R.D. Chapman, *Student Resistance to Apartheid at the University of Fort Hare: Freedom Now, a Degree Tomorrow* (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2016), although its view that UFH is 'the birthplace of activism in South Africa' (pp.7–26) is overstated.

17 J. Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle: Policy and Resistance in South Africa 1940–1990* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

18 CL, MS 14,717 Fort Hare Troubles in 1955; CL, MS 14,724 Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland and the South African Treason Trials 1956–7; CL, PR 3682 R.H.W. Shepherd Collection, Correspondence Regarding Shepherd's Work, Lovedale etc. CL, PR 4088 Alexander Kerr Collection.



*Summary of 1920 Protests*

The Lovedale protests started on 25 April, with a riot in accommodation and other buildings, around complaints about food shortage and changes in the flour used to make bread. There were mass meetings of students following the first expression of troubles, then a mass meeting that decided to strike the next day.<sup>19</sup> Then, immediately following, technical workshops, dormitories and other buildings were trashed, a grain store burned and the electricity powerhouse damaged. Staff houses and some staff members were pelted with boulders. Many students removed to a nearby hill, a further meeting was held and most remained there all night. After the arrival of police, 198 students were taken before a magistrate's court and were mainly found guilty. Principal Henderson was on leave, but on his return and following communications with other principals, he instituted severe penalties, including many expulsions.

*The Narrative of 1946 Events*

Between 1944 and 1946, more than 20 significant protests across the key black educational institutions are noted in the Lovedale files, including trashing and burning property, refusing to attend classes and generally being what is described as 'disobedient to authority'. At the time, Lovedale and most of the others were independent bodies partly government-funded but under the control of the missionary societies. Government's response to the events of 1946 – especially after the National Party took office in 1948 – was to bring these institutions under education departmental control and end their more liberal response to education provision – the Eiselen Commission was established in 1949 in the wake of the riots and recommended the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which ended their independence; its role is discussed in detail by Kros.<sup>20</sup>

By the end of the Second World War, Lovedale had a complement of around 1,200 people, including staff members, non-boarding students, boarders, hospital patients, farm and other workers. A severe drought had caused food shortages. Immediately before the riot, there were outbreaks of 'insubordination' toward staff and also related events, which an unnamed student described to a Lovedale Council member, Senator Welsh, as a 'reign of terror' among the students themselves.<sup>21</sup> On 7 August 1946, and said to be because of deficiency in the sugar ration, around 200 male students rioted, broke windows and damaged other Lovedale buildings, including dwelling-houses, dormitories and the library. Attempts were also made to set fire to various buildings. Police from Alice were called in, and many students were arrested. On 10 August, some 75 students marched into Alice, where their fellows were being held, to show solidarity. A day later, the remaining 185 male and 275 female students of all ages were involved in jeering and catcalling and failed to turn up for classes; some stone-throwing occurred. 'The students' as a named body also issued notice of a strike unless certain conditions were met.<sup>22</sup> It was then decided by Principal Shepherd to close the institution.

After a trial on 16 August, 152 students were found guilty of public violence and given a variety of punishments, including (later) expulsion. A feature commented on by the presiding magistrate was that no one among the students provided any detail; when

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19 For the 1920 narrative, CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(1), 'The riots at Lovedale', title amended from 'Student riot narrative'. For 1946, see CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, Files A(1) – A(7), 'Narrative origins'.

20 C. Kros, *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2010).

21 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(1), 'Lovedale Governing Council meeting', 20 August 1946.

22 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots: File A(4), 'Committee of Inquiry Report', 30 November 1946.



questioned in the witness box, some said briefly that they were frightened by ‘the mob’, but no names or other information were given.<sup>23</sup>

When Lovedale reopened after nine weeks of closure, some 80 students were barred, reduced by Shepherd from a larger number because the governing council disagreed on how to handle those convicted. The council also set up an internal commission of enquiry, involving a mixture of council members and outsiders, which took witness statements, considered written documentation, interviewed staff members, solicited student testimonies, reviewed verbatim reports of the trial and considered other evidence. There are also many relevant letters and other documents from a semi-private investigation made by Shepherd, who sent out questionnaires, solicited written statements from staff members and wrote to other educational establishments, among his other enquiries. As principal, he also received letters from the parents or guardians of many of the excluded students, from a small number of students themselves and from a number of black representative organisations, discussed below. These parallel activities produced the documentation now in the archive collections drawn on.

## 1946: Events, Sequence, Causality

### *Causality and Triggering Factors*

As noted earlier, most of the archival evidence emanates from Lovedale authority – the principal, the council, and its own committee of enquiry – and much of it is concerned with the whys and wherefores of the protests. What comes across is the tacit assumption that causality can be discovered through piecing together the sequence of when things happened and which event followed which prior event, which is why many of the commentators were trying to establish a narrative of occurrences to work out the ‘real causes’. In pinning down sequence, considerable attention was given to discovering triggering factors and then distinguishing between those deemed spurious, those that were just pretexts and those that really were causal. The immediate triggering events involving complaints about food and diet more generally were identified by some staff as merely excuses to disguise pre-planning: ‘[t]he food is always used as excuse’.<sup>24</sup> But is it the case that this was just an excuse or pretext?

The immediate perceived triggers were a reduction in the sugar ration and changes in the flour and bread ration, both being raised at a Student Representative Council (SRC) meeting held just before the riot. This was followed by a large student group wanting to go to a sports event at Fort Hare, with its members becoming angry and disruptive when refused permission. In addition, and as discussed below, the exertion of discipline by particular staff members and by the Lovedale authorities more generally was mentioned by many. In this connection, it is worth noting that the 1946 protests occurred in a context where a high proportion of Lovedale’s students were boarders and more than a third of these were men over 20.<sup>25</sup> Various of the male teachers in its large high school had just returned from war work (over half the white male teachers had been away). This had led to the re-imposition of a more stringent disciplinary regime, imposing deferential behaviour by students towards staff, not surprisingly particularly resented by these older students.

While recognising some of the complexities, food, discipline, unjust authority and related complaints are seen by Hyslop as largely pretextual, and the causes as primarily structural factors; he proposes that ‘[t]he supposed cause of the whole incident was students’ discontent about the rationing of sugar and this was how the students identified “the

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(1), ‘McGillivray statement’, council minutes, 20 August 1946.

<sup>25</sup> CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File B(1), ‘Breakdown of numbers’, 24 February 1947.

dominant ideology”’.<sup>26</sup> Kros’s more detailed examination of the unfolding events also concludes that, while complex, the protests were ‘part of the rising tide of African militancy’.<sup>27</sup> This is a somewhat different interpretation of the 1946 Lovedale riots than is proposed here, which, in summary, is that these complaints were real propellants that motivated many students, with more overt African militancy being a direct influence for a few, acting as a more diffuse stimulus for others, operating in parallel with ethnic hierarchies for some and being propounded by a caucus with direct external political connections. Certainly there was ‘the rising tide’ mentioned by Kros, but as the following discussion will show, what sparked off the chain of action that comprised the Lovedale protests were the micro-level local matters and complaints, which erupted in a way that intermeshed them with macro-level concerns.

The 1946 riots were preceded by lower-key protests in 1945, which are described as having been dealt with by turning a blind eye or levying a fine paid by parents or guardians. As a consequence, Lovedale’s students had little experience of being themselves punished for disciplinary infringements, and from written statements and student letters requesting re-admission, many thought involvement in the protests would be fairly inconsequential.<sup>28</sup> Certainly, most did not expect expulsion and being barred from taking the examinations necessary to matriculate properly from courses, including teacher training courses.

The student intake in 1946 was very mixed, and this year of entry is underlined in red against various names on lists of applications for re-admission in the procedure adopted for this.<sup>29</sup> It included quite a number of older students in their early and middle 20s, notably a group of men from the Transvaal and Johannesburg areas with political, work and military experience. There were also students from very different, elite backgrounds in Bechuanaland, while the preponderance of the student population overall was Xhosa and Eastern Cape.<sup>30</sup> There were, then, important differences of culture, social standing, ideas, political views, age and experience.

The 1946 protests are described as a mixture of activities. Some of the students had been involved in boycotts and insubordination in 1945 and earlier in 1946; some were involved in the riot; some were involved in the marches, some in the student meeting precipitating the call to strike; nearly all participated in the main meetings of the whole student body. But it was seen as difficult at the time, and is so now, to pin down who was involved in what, in spite of the large amount of archived documentation, and even though much of this is concerned with individual students. This is because none of the students apart from a handful said anything specific about what happened, nor did they name who was involved. Examples include perfunctory comments made in witness statements that appear verbatim in the trial report, ubiquitous ‘do not know’ responses on copies of the long questionnaire circulated by Shepherd when assessing student requests for re-admission, and a refusal to say anything beyond vague generalities when students were asked by the internal committee of enquiry to give testimonies.<sup>31</sup> This was for a range of reasons intimated in the documentation: for perhaps most it was a means of self-protection; for some it was an expression of in-group loyalty, and for a few it was a conspiracy of silence. The reasons influencing the majority became apparent as the committee of enquiry carried out its work, relating to pressures and fears of reprisal from an alternative student locus of authority and

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26 Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle*, p. 11. See also J. Hyslop, ‘Food, Authority and Politics: Student Riots in South African Schools 1945–1976’, in S. Clingman (ed.), *Regions and Repertoires: Topics in South African Politics and Culture* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1991), pp. 84–115.

27 Kros, *The Seeds of Separate Development*, pp. 73, 83.

28 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, Files R(1) – R(3).

29 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, Files A(2) – A(3).

30 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File B(1), ‘Breakdown of numbers’, 24 February 1947.

31 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(4), ‘Committee of Inquiry Report’, 30 November 1946.

control, which had developed separate from the institutional authorities of the principal, staff members and the governing council, and also separate from the SRC, whose members collectively resigned early in proceedings.

#### *Authority and the Government Machinery*

There was a generally negative view of white-instituted authority and widespread questioning of its legitimacy on the part of many Lovedale students, added to by resentment of the more stringent disciplinary regime imposed by returning male staff. This included when the edicts were issued by black and coloured as well as by white staff. Shepherd recorded that students had complained about ‘demands that students should say “sir” when addressing staff ... [and that] they were not allowed to question things ...’.<sup>32</sup> It also comes out in comments such as ‘[t]he modern African boys ... identify the European staff in the institution as part of the Government machinery ...’ and ‘[t]he students had developed an attitude that was opposed to authority as such, and the riot was largely a rebellion against authority’.<sup>33</sup>

The issues identified regarding authority, deference, education and governance were both local to Lovedale and had wider import. Just before the 1946 protest, Shepherd wrote to the head of the Alice police about receiving ‘a long typewritten effusion ... in large measure a political document demanding freedom for African youth, condemning the too strict discipline of Lovedale, and complaining about the food’.<sup>34</sup> Such concerns were shared by many students, as in a written comment that ‘[w]hat is the good of going out and crying for Liberalism and yet you have not been allowed to study when your mind is fresh ... That man is born free ... does not only apply to the European student but also applies to the African, Coloured and Indian student’.<sup>35</sup> What comes across in letters from parents is they saw the students as led astray by ringleaders and the exclusions as too severe, and more generally that ‘[w]e send them to obtain education and not to stir up trouble’.<sup>36</sup> Not surprisingly, the organised associations involved took a different line and insisted that all students should be immediately re-instated and Lovedale re-opened.<sup>37</sup> However, the few student statements on the file indicate that they had expected Lovedale to provide education of a kind that would free their minds and, being different from the society around it, support a more equal future. The issues raised about food consequently had great symbolic import as well as importance in themselves for growing young people, combining around a sense of injustice about failed educational promises. The gulf between expectation and experience of the institution perceived somewhat differently by students, parents and associations none the less brought into relief the actual existence of a coercive authority.<sup>38</sup> That is, the Lovedale regime had liberal aspirations, but it enforced hierarchical and authoritarian relationships and

32 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File B(2), ‘Extracts from journal of RHW Shepherd’, 30 November 1945.

33 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(4), ‘Committee of Inquiry Report’, 30 November 1946.

34 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File B(2), R.H.W. Shepherd to Officer in Charge Alice Police, 4 December 1945.

35 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File B(2), ‘Inside Lovedale’, nd. The signature on this has been torn off by an unknown hand.

36 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File R(2), ‘Parents’ letters’, Joseph Kolisang to R.H.W. Shepherd, 18 September 1946.

37 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File N, ‘Meeting with Ciskei Parents Association’; File P, ‘Transkei organised bodies’. Govan Mbeki was Secretary of the Transkei Organised Bodies.

38 See also G. Duncan, ‘Coercive Agency in Mission Education in the Lovedale Missionary Institution’, *HTS Theological Studies*, 60, 3 (2004), pp. 947–92, available at <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/13365>, retrieved 17 May 2018; G. Duncan, ‘Coercive Agency: Lovedale Missionary Institution Under Principals Arthur Wilkie and RHW Shepherd’, *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies*, 38, 3 (2010), pp. 430–51.

sought to control and contain the increasing radicalisation of the student body, including treating its ideals as misguided.

For the students, authority was associated with viewing the institution as part of the state apparatus, as, in effect, the government at local level. All those working for it were seen as implicated, black and 'European' staff members. The head of St Matthews, in a letter sent in April 1945, focused on this anti-authority aspect, writing to Shepherd that 'we have had serious trouble here with a group of our students ... We are of the opinion that there is a widespread anti-authority being disseminated among the African peoples' [*sic*], referring specifically to a group from Johannesburg. While Shepherd's reply pointed out that 'the old-time relationship between the missionary and the African – a kind of master-and-servant relationship – has gone', his wider responses to the protests show that he concurred with much of this thinking.<sup>39</sup>

The head of Blythswood wrote to Shepherd two weeks later, asking if Lovedale had been having trouble with its African staff and stating that St John's had.<sup>40</sup> The role of black staff and the extent to which they might be implicated in the protests was raised as cause for concern in some institutions, although it is not mentioned in the archived documents regarding Lovedale. As Shepherd does mention it regarding later events at Fort Hare, the implication is that it was not an issue at Lovedale in 1946, though it is possible that its particular regime prevented it from being openly expressed.

Lovedale's student body included many who were unused to mixed ethnic contexts. Some ethnic groups were thought of as subordinate to others, and pressure was put on them by those perceived as more powerful. In particular, the numerical dominance of Xhosa was resented by students from elsewhere, with tensions around this commented on in statements. This had surfaced around the different languages in which teaching was provided, with Dr R.T. (Roseberry Tandwefika) Bokwe stating that: 'there was some idea among the students that sooner or later the non-Xhosa speaking students would not be allowed to come to Lovedale ... There was created in the minds of these students the impression that in any case they were to be eliminated from Lovedale'.<sup>41</sup> Commenting on anger from Basuto and Bechuana students about this, another teacher suggested that they had misunderstood the dropping of second-language teaching in Tswana and Sotho as being in favour of Xhosa, whereas it was actually in favour of English-medium teaching.<sup>42</sup> Whatever the facts, it is clear that sections of the student body thought that some received preferential treatment while others were discriminated against.

### *Countervailing Authority*

Students at Lovedale and related institutions were living in a context in which the traditional mechanisms of ethnic, community and family constraints experienced by young people were present only in a removed, distant way, rather than through face-to-face daily contact. The institutional expectation was that self-constraint would replace this, encouraged by a disciplinary framework and its regulation by staff. Lovedale's Committee of Inquiry Report commented here that 'the African people are passing through a period of transition – from the restraint of family and tribal control to the non-restraint of the outside world – with a

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39 CL, PR 3682 R.H.W. Shepherd Collection, Correspondence Regarding Shepherd's Work, Lovedale etc, C.E. Hundleby to R.H.W. Shepherd, 6 April 1945; and R.H.W. Shepherd to C.E. Hundleby, 8 April 1945.

40 CL, PR 3682 R.H.W. Shepherd Collection, correspondence regarding Shepherd's work, Lovedale etc, D.W. Semple to R.H.W. Shepherd, 16 April 1945.

41 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, council minutes, 'Dr Bokwe statement', 20 August 1946. Bokwe was a senior Lovedale figure and council member.

42 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, council minutes, 'Dr Benyon statement', 20 August 1946. Benyon was in the high school.

strong tendency to assert freedom of action often regardless of the consequences'.<sup>43</sup> A result was the growth of countervailing sources of authority based on ethnic identity and political involvement.

The various inquiries into events by staff, the principal and council led them to recognise that such divisions and hierarchies within the student body had become significant, determining which groups behaved in what ways during the protests. Countervailing authority was expressed in different ways, including the exertion of authority by some ethnic groupings, the pressures of the collectivity, the threats of a caucus. However, in spite of the frequently negative feelings expressed about this, there was still an almost blanket student silence about who was involved in what aspects of the protests. Added to this, comments from students and staff mentioned the difference between the riot, boycotts and strike, and suggested that different ethnic and other groups of students had been involved in each. There are many mentions of a caucus or inner group operating with a pre-determined strategy at two points.

In 1945 and early 1946, a small, influential group existed in Form V in the High School, which called itself 'the Board' (from Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*) and saw its work as being 'mice-hunters', that is, to 'hunt' more timid students to carry out 'insubordination' of different kinds.<sup>44</sup> In the main phase of the protests another picture emerges, of a perceived caucus of older male students, predominantly from the Transvaal, operating to promote the protests but staying out of the limelight themselves, so that they would not be among those who were arrested or identified by name. Regarding their activities, a number of witnesses stated in general terms that compulsion was exerted by a few over the many in distributing propaganda material and threatening reprisals against those who did not participate and greater reprisals against any who provided information to those in authority.

There were also student channels of communication that operated across institutional boundaries, with information and sometimes people moving between them. Lovedale and Fort Hare being in the same place facilitated exchanges here, but it also existed more widely, with information about protests elsewhere circulating between student bodies. Similar communication channels existed among the principals and operated in addition to Association of Heads meetings, including the telephone and exchanges of letters about signs of unrest. For instance, when the Wilberforce Institute in Johannesburg experienced protests and a strike in 1948, its principal, B.S. Ranjuili, wrote to Shepherd requesting information about an ex-Lovedale student, Kitchener Leballo. In thanking Shepherd for his reply, Ranjuili commented, 'Re K. Leballo. A very bad student indeed!!! He and a few others have worked our Institute into a most unfortunate strike ... And there is also evidence that some nine members of the staff are behind it all'.<sup>45</sup> Leballo's caucus role is returned to later in this discussion.

### *The Spirit of Unrest*

Change and unrest were experienced after 1945 in many parts of the world, and there was a wide, zeitgeist sense that the old order had to change. Many members of oppressed racial and ethnic communities had, during the war, been in military, educational and religious contexts where new and better possibilities for the future were envisaged, including in South Africa. The widespread changes were to an important extent connected with international labour and race movements and associated with aspirational ideas about freedom, equality and justice. From the 1920s onwards, there was the growth of black political organisations and a black literary and political communications industry providing a more radical voice.

43 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(4), 'Committee of Inquiry Report', 30 November 1946.

44 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, B(1) 'Unrest in 1945'; B(2) 'The invincible Board', L. Mtshizana, nd.

45 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(7), B.S. Ranjuili to R.H.W. Shepherd, 14 April 1948.

These political movements were premised on ideas about rights and human worth. Regarding the Lovedale protests, there was recognition, albeit reluctant, on the part of some authority figures that wider political factors were involved and not only local circumstances. In a 1946 letter to Shepherd, for example, council member Walter Webber wrote, 'I was not surprised to learn that you had traced the trouble to the entrance of a few ringleaders ... but this does not go far to solve the real problem, which is how we are to deal with the spirit of unrest and even antipathy among the educated Natives', going on to identify the 'colour bar' and the denial of the franchise as the 'real problem'.<sup>46</sup>

However, in trying to work out what happened and why regarding the 1946 protests, Lovedale authorities and staff focused largely on the immediate aspects of unfolding events and triggering factors to determine how blame should be apportioned and punishments gauged; the wider context was not referred to. Their enquiries were concerned with *what* had happened, and assumed that this explained *why*. This is why a number of documents can be found in the records in which people saw a sequential narrative of occurrences as in itself providing a causal pattern and explanation. This had also happened in respect of the 1920 protest. For instance, teacher Charles Pilson's statement focused entirely on local factors: not being careful enough in selecting pupils, not ensuring the payment of fees, not punishing those 'whose conduct has been a source of trouble to their particular dep[artmen]t'.<sup>47</sup>

In establishing a narrative, many commentators struggled to distinguish between phenomena called 'triggers', but which were actually pretexts, and those that really were causal factors. The key example concerns the comment noted earlier that complaints about food were simply a pretext or excuse. For many, the distinction between substance and pretext was not so simple, for there had indeed been food shortages and unwelcome changes in diet. Interestingly, however, the records indicate that complaints in 1920 about food were seen as a real causal factor and as having coalesced into grievances erupting immediately before, and fuelling, the riot. By contrast, complaints about food in 1946 are described in a more perfunctory way, perhaps because better communications ensured that the wider protests were known about and given more attention.

In surveying the evidence he had collected, Shepherd presented a long typed narrative of main events to Lovedale's council on 20 August 1946. As well as those protests expressed towards staff, others had remained largely within the student body until the riot broke out. They were described to Shepherd as terror, around the activities of a caucus promoting the protests through force and the threat of reprisals:

during a few days preceding this strike, and actually during the day of the strike, and on the few days following there was an actual reign of terror in the Institution. Some boys terrified the weaker ones ... There appeared to be a certain clique of students who were responsible for action, and it managed to keep this section very secret ... Unfortunately, those boys were not all of them amongst those taken over to gaol.<sup>48</sup>

### *Local Factors and Structural Aspects*

While the internal committee of enquiry appointed by Lovedale's governing council worked through all the issues raised, its report did not see local factors as causal. Instead it focused on changes in the wider world and long-term structural aspects:

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46 CL, PR 3682 R.H.W. Shepherd Collection, correspondence regarding Shepherd's work, Lovedale etc, W. Webber to R.H.W. Shepherd, 23 September 1946.

47 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A, 1920, C. Pilson to J. Henderson, 20 July 1920. Pilson was head of the High School in 1946 and adopted a similar position.

48 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(1), 'Lovedale Governing Council Minutes', 20 August 1946. 'Those boys' were in fact the adult male students.



thoughtless identification of the European staff with the system responsible for these grievances had led to unhappy relations with the European teachers ... there is a growing middle class ... which is becoming of great political significance, and which has its most active expression in demands for the abolition of laws especially affecting Africans and for increased representation on public bodies and in the Legislature ... their complaints are against Europeans generally not just the government.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, the majority view arrived at by those directly involved was that the riot was the result of local factors regarding insufficient numbers of staff, a sudden restitution of more stringent discipline and a change in rations, spearheaded into effect by a caucus, with wider unrest being the result of naivety or compulsion.

For Principal Shepherd and many others directly involved, then, it was not that the wider context was unrecognised, but that it was understood very differently. One person's search for freedom and justice was another person's naivety or being compelled. Their overwhelming concern was to pin down what events had happened when, involving which people, for without this they were unable to discern causality and so comprehend why the protests had occurred. In a sense they were right, for 'big events' always require 'small events' to propel them. But, as a result, the authorities profoundly misunderstood what had happened because they failed to appreciate that there was a 'big event' involved that was not reducible to local circumstances, in the shape of movements for equality and justice.

## **Lovedale as a Place Out of Place**

As Lovedale's council report rather awkwardly noted, widespread changes in thinking and in self- and group identity, together with political protests occurring outside the educational context, provided the broad context for the protests within education at the elite black institutions, specifically Lovedale. The 1946 protests are the tip of an iceberg in relation to wider issues and accompanying political events. However, changes in the zeitgeist do not necessarily result in radical action at local levels; this requires the existence of suitable circumstances and propellant events for all the factors to coalesce, as happened at Lovedale.

There were important aspects concerning the educational context that are reflected in 1946 documents. Although Lovedale and parallel institutions were not the havens of liberalism that their principals supposed, they were 'places out of place' in that they were stongly committed to higher-level education for the majority population; Lovedale itself had an unusual mix of people of different ethnicities, skin colours, genders and ages who occupied positions in different power structures, with a range of competing groups forming around these. It was also largely a boarding establishment characterised by the absence of the ordinary family, community and ethnic constraints, and by the existence of an authoritarian, well-meaning, white-controlled governing body. This increased the influence and importance of the intra-group hierarchies among the students, which could become magnified in extraordinary circumstances and be seen as an alternative locus of authority.

Such differences were volatile because they derived from divisions between established and outsider groups who sometimes overlapped and sometimes competed, depending on circumstances. An interesting example in 1946 was mentioned by a number of Lovedale staff, concerning some men's contention that women were not respected and so should not teach older pupils, and that, as discipline had to be maintained outside classrooms, they could not supervise male students in public places. It was also reported that male teachers, even though present, did not check male students who jeered or barracked women teachers

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49 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(4), 'Committee of Inquiry Report', 30 November 1946.



in classrooms.<sup>50</sup> The returning male teachers were seeking to restore their power base, an important part of which was to challenge the freer staff–student relations that had obtained in the war years and the connected increased involvement of female staff in teaching higher-level male students.

As noted earlier, there were small caucuses at Lovedale involved in spearheading the different protest activities and groupings. In the earlier period, ‘the Board’ in form V of the high school was perceived as home-grown and composed of long-term Lovedale students who operated in a self-consciously literary and political way.<sup>51</sup> The later caucus, however, was seen as very different in composition, character and mode of operation. It was composed from among the 1946 intake with a preponderance of older male Johannesburgers. Its *agent provocateur* aspect was conjectural in the evidence collected by Shepherd and others, as shown in institutional documents being marked to identify the 1946 intake and establish their prior backgrounds and role in the protests. However, its activities were confirmed in a 1968 interview with the man identified as its leader.<sup>52</sup> At the time calling himself Kitchener Leballo, the well-known Potlako K. Leballo had a long political career, including as national secretary of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC); his political activism started when he was a teacher, developing at Lovedale and the Wilberforce Institute before his better-known PAC involvement.<sup>53</sup>

Another caucus was identified at Fort Hare when a riot occurred there in 1956.<sup>54</sup> Acting principal H.R. Burrows reported to its senate that ‘the caucus’ was responsible for intimidating many students, propelling the riot and earlier boycotts and acts of violence. The riot led to the temporary closure of Fort Hare on 4 May 1956. Shepherd wrote a narrative of these events, commenting in passing that some of the more violent activity, such as stone-throwing, had been directed at visiting African preachers and lecturers as well as white.<sup>55</sup> Authority was seen as white; ‘quislings’ were mentioned by some in 1946; teacher and boarding master McGillivray was told by angry students that ‘Bokwe is with the authorities’.<sup>56</sup>

In addition, radicalism and protest were not confined to students at Fort Hare in 1956. Regarding this, Shepherd wrote to a council member, James Dougall, that Fort Hare had become involved in the mass arrests leading to the Rivonia treason trials, because Professor Z.K. Matthews had been arrested and a fund started to support his defence. He continued,

[i]n a publication called *World Dominion* he [Matthews] is quoted as saying ... ‘What we Africans are aiming for is the creation of a purely African State, that is, the re-orientation of South Africa towards an African character ... as a prelude to its inclusion in a United States of Africa’ ... this is typical of the statements he has been making.<sup>57</sup>

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50 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File B(1), ‘Unrest in Lovedale in 1945’.

51 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(4), ‘Committee of Inquiry Report’, 30 November 1946.

52 Potlako Kitchener Leballo, ‘1968 Interview. Indiana, USA’, 11 September 1968, Digital Information South Africa Archive, available at <https://www.sahistory.org.za/collection/30327>, retrieved 2 October 2018.

53 J. Bolnick, ‘Double-Cross: Potlako Leballo and the 1946 Riots at Lovedale Missionary Institution’ (unpublished African studies seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, February 1990), available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/39667357.pdf>, retrieved 17 May 2018. See also J. Bolnick, ‘Potlako Leballo – the Man Who Hurried to Meet his Destiny’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 29, 3, (1991), pp. 413–42. The political activities of Leballo and others could be usefully explored through biographical means, but this lies outside the scope of the present discussion.

54 CL, MS 14,717 Fort Hare Troubles in 1955, ‘The Fort Hare trouble. A narrative of events’, nd. See also T.R.H. White, ‘Student Disturbances at Fort Hare in 1955’, *Kleio*, 29, 1 (1997), pp. 115–38.

55 *Ibid.*

56 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(1), ‘McGillivray statement’, council minutes, 20 August 1946.

57 CL, MS 14,724 Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland and the South African Treason Trials 1956–7, R.H.W. Shepherd to James Dougall, 28 December 1956.

This is not surprising, and other staff members are likely to have had similar views. It is useful to think about this regarding the earlier protests also.

In 1945, the principal of Blythswood commented to Shepherd that St John's Umtata had had 'trouble' with its African staff.<sup>58</sup> In 1948, Principal Ranjuili of the Wilberforce Institute mentioned to Shepherd the radicalism of nine staff members.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps staff with more radical views might have gravitated to the black-run Wilberforce, but this is not so regarding St John's. What is interesting here is less that an increase in staff radicalism might have occurred in parallel with student radicalism, but that there are no mentions of this regarding Lovedale, perhaps because its coercive authority extended to the staff too.

To a large extent, the target of the 1946 Lovedale protests was authority figures of all kinds, embodied in both black and white staff, and disciplinary measures of all kinds, with the institution and its personnel seen as part of a state apparatus premised on discrimination, segregation and the enforcement of unjust inequalities. The November 1946 report by Lovedale's committee of enquiry pointed out that the students had not only identified the white staff as part of government machinery and vented their unhappiness on school authorities, but also mentioned quislings and characterised anyone who helped the authorities as *amatshaka* – a coward or traitor.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

Ideas about educational protest drawn from post-1970s events were outlined in the introduction. These are now reviewed in relation to the Lovedale and associated student protests of 1946.

Firstly, such protests are usually dated from the 1970s and the perceived watershed of the Soweto uprising. While this is not surprising, given the salience of the Soweto rising in South Africa's history, it is important to avoid presentism and recognise the long lineage of South African protest, including that within educational contexts. As discussion has shown, 'protest nation' has existed for a considerable time, although of course its character has changed over its long history. While the focus here is on the 1946 protests at Lovedale, the archived records refer to protests elsewhere and cover the period from 1900 to 1960. They also make evident, albeit briefly, a change in the character of protest over time and regarding the politicisation of teaching staff as well as students.<sup>61</sup>

Secondly, can the protests and riots at Lovedale be seen as relatively spontaneous and an expression of popular feeling, or were they organised or even orchestrated? Clearly they were influenced by wider political protests, including those happening elsewhere in the educational context, and something more amorphous: the change in the zeitgeist referred to earlier and associated ideas about equality, freedom and justice. Certainly, at Lovedale and later at Fort Hare, they were also influenced by the activities of caucuses that operated to encourage, promote and constrain protest, including the use of force and the threat of reprisals. The 1946 caucus is particularly interesting in this respect, for it offers a clear case of what Duncan calls 'mediation',<sup>62</sup> in enforcing external political views in the local context of the 'place out of place' that Lovedale aspired to be but fell short of. But perhaps the main way in which the events of 1946 are

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58 CL, PR 3682 R.H.W. Shepherd Collection, correspondence regarding Shepherd's work, Lovedale etc, D.W. Semple to R.H.W. Shepherd, 16 April 1945.

59 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(7), B.S. Ranjuili to R.H.W. Shepherd, 14 April 1948.

60 CL, MS 16,453 Lovedale Riots, File A(4), 'Committee of Inquiry Report', 30 November 1946.

61 The 1950s Bantu education boycotts are discussed in T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945* (London, Longman, 1983), and Kros, *The Seeds of Separate Development*.

62 Duncan, *Protest Nation*, p. 1.

evidence of mediation lies in the increase in effective channels of communication and the rapidity with which knowledge of protests spread.

Thirdly, what do the events of 1946 tell of whether their causes were systemic, structural factors, or calling the government to account, or had more local dynamics? In fact, they witness all of these. In particular, the frequently mentioned triggering grievances at local level should not be sidelined or dismissed in considering explanations. In the Lovedale case, these included food and diet, disciplinary regimes, enforced deference and lack of freedom of expression, all of which were important and motivated many in the student body to participate in at least some of the unfolding events. It was not just a case of a secret clique producing the riots, as Shepherd intimated, nor even the great resentment of racist measures by government as the council's committee of enquiry report had it, for local factors had an important role in propelling people into action, and this needs to be taken seriously. If food, discipline and related grievances are repeatedly mentioned, it is because they were important to those who articulated them, and this should not be seen as a proxy for something structural beyond their grasp.

Fourthly, events at Lovedale and related institutions show clearly that they provide a fertile context for protest because part of their rationale is to educate people to comprehend a body of ideas, marshal their thoughts about this, express their opinions and debate them with others. In the wider circumstance of post-1945 change and the associated ferment of political ideas, many in the student body at Lovedale saw the institution as the appropriate place to debate such things, taking its ideals about education and freedom of thought at face value. What they came up against were institutional hierarchies and the governing regime of coercive authority, in a context where there was a considerable gap between Lovedale's proclaimed values and its actual practices, and where countervailing authority was also being exerted.

Fifthly, there were, over time, changes in coercive authority as well as in protest. Lovedale in 1946 was a different, larger and more complex institution from what existed at the time of the 1920 riots, and Fort Hare in 1956 was different again. In the events of 1946, Shepherd saw Lovedale and its prevailing regime as liberal, liberating and beneficent, and was unable to grasp that, for many students, it was simply an arm of government, and all its authority figures were implicated in this. Other higher-level staff also saw Lovedale as different, a 'place out of place' in important ways opposed to the government and its policies. For most students, however, it was another part of the problem, with their collective eye on how they were treated within the institution in relation to its proclaimed values. It was not only the systemic factors that were informing the wider struggle that influenced them. The local circumstances were important, neither a pretext nor merely a setting for structural issues to play out.

Sixthly, what the well-documented events at Lovedale in 1946 indicate is that, *in and of themselves*, macro-level structural matters did not provide the impetus for the range of activities involved in 1946 protests. There were repeated attempts by Lovedale personnel and commentators to construct a narrative of events in a sequence and, through this, to identify triggers, and seeing the factors so identified as merely excuses covering structural causes greatly misunderstands the complexities of the events that occurred. It is clear that both macro-level and micro-level factors were important in producing the protests at Lovedale in 1946, and the detailed analysis of the archival materials discussed here shows that the micro and the macro cannot easily be prised apart, for they intersected in shifting, complicated ways to produce the protests and riot.

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